

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 4999

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, ET, US

SUBJECT: RANK OF MAAG MISSION CHIEF

1. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE MAAG CHIEF POSITION IN MANY COUNTRIES MAY SOON BE REDUCED IN RANK FROM BRIGADIER GENERAL TO FULL COLONEL. ALTHOUGH WE UNDERSTAND THAT THERE IS NO INTENTION AT THE MOMENT OF REDUCING THE RANK OF THE MAAG CHIEF IN ETHIOPIA WHEN GENERAL YOW IS REPLACED THIS SUMMER, THERE APPEARS SOME POSSIBILITY THAT CONSIDERATION MAY BE GIVEN TO SUCH AN ALTERNATIVE. I THEREFORE WISH TO PUT ON THE RECORD IN VERY STRONG TERMS MY VIEW THAT ANY LOWERING OF THE CHIEF MAAG'S RANK IN THE NEAR FUTURE WOULD HAVE SERIOUS POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS ADVERSE TO OUR INTERESTS HERE.

2. STATE AND DEFENSE ARE FULLY AWARE OF THE ENORMOUS IMPORTANCE WHICH THE EPMG ATTACHES TO THE US MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND OF ITS DEEP SUSPICION THAT THE USG NEITHER FULLY APPRECIATES THE SOMALI THREAT NOR WHOLEHEARTEDLY DESIRES TO PROVIDE THE EPMG WITH ALL POSSIBLE MILITARY ASSISTANCE. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES THE REPLACEMENT OF GENERAL YOW BY A FULL COLONEL WOULD BE READ BY MANY INFLUENTIAL PMAC MEMBERS AS UNMISTAKABLE AND IRREFUTABLE PROOF OF THE VALIDITY OF THEIR SUSPICIONS. THE DISADVANTAGES WHICH WOULD RESULT ARE CLEARLY OUT OF PROPORTION TO ANY ADVANTAGES WHICH MIGHT ACCRUE TO THE USG.

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3. THERE ARE OTHER VALID ARGUMENTS FOR NOT LOWERING THE RANK

OF THIS POSITION: (1) THE SIZE AND COMPLEXITY OF THE TOTAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM REQUIRES THE MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE OF A GENERAL OFFICER; (2) A GENERAL OFFICER CAN GAIN ENTRIES AND EXERT PRESSURES, PARTICULARLY IN HIS FREQUENT DEALINGS WITH THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE, WHICH WOULD BE BEYOND THE REACH OF A FULL COLONEL BECAUSE OF THE RESPECT THE GENERAL RANK STILL COMMANDS IN ETHIOPIA; (3) THE RANK OF BRIGADIER GENERAL IS APPROPRIATE IN VIEW OF THE CURRENT AUTHORIZATION OF SERVICE SECTION CHIEFS IN THE MAAG AS FULL COLONELS; AND (4) THE RANK OF BRIGADIER GENERAL IS SENSIBLE IN RELATION TO THE RANKS OF OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COUNTRY TEAM. WHILE ALL OF THESE ARGUMENTS ARE OF SOME IMPORTANCE, THE ADVERSE POLITICAL IMPACT ON USG-EPMG RELATIONS OF THE CHANGE WOULD BE FAR MORE SIGNIFICANT.

4. FOR THE REASONS SET FORTH ABOVE I URGE IN THE STRONGEST TERMS THAT GENERAL YOW'S SUCCESSOR HERE BE A BRIGADIER GENERAL.
HUMM
EL

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY.

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